
SF League of Pissed Off Voters 2020 CD12 Questionnaire

Hello candidates! Thank you for filling out the League's questionnaire. Please complete the questionnaire by 5pm on Sunday, December 1st if you wish to be considered for the League's endorsement. Please use this form rather than formatting it into a Word document or PDF. If you have any questions, you can contact us at TheLeagueSF@gmail.com.

Candidate Info

Need to see the other questions before you get started? Just fill this in. It's the only section with required answers.

Name *

Shahid Buttar

Campaign Contact *

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Website

<https://shahidforchange.us/>

Tell Us About You

Why are you running for this office?

I am running for office because I can't turn a blind eye to corporate predation marginalizing the future. I've been an advocate for the public interest for 20 years, and for that entire time, I've watched Speaker Pelosi side with Wall Street and Washington against the San Francisco values that she claims credit for representing.

I've been building the movement to place people before profit and communities before corporations for 20 years. I'm poised to help the left wing of Congress both by adding a vote to the Progressive Caucus and the ranks of its bolder members of color, and also by adding depth in constitutional law, civil liberties, tech regulation, and foreign policy.

My work has long been intersectional, interdisciplinary, and prolific. The consistency of my work, its substantive intersectionality, and its interdisciplinary method—in addition to my results in the 2018 election—each reflect my unique preparation to take on the quest to unseat the leading corporate Democrat in the House.

The incumbent has failed to champion our city's visionary values in Congress. Corporate Democrats have repeatedly proven complicit in ongoing abuses of corporate rule, including war for profit, our mounting global climate crisis, (...)

What are the top three issues you will work on and how will you implement solutions in a timely manner?

- Establishing healthcare as a human right
- dismantling mass incarceration
- defending democracy

Implementing solutions to the legislative branch requires building consensus, which has already emerged across the grassroots with respect to establishing healthcare is a human right. Taking the case for universal healthcare on the road, particularly to the districts of representatives in Congress who oppose it, is one way I aim to help build the consensus after liberating the CA-12 seat.

I will prioritize dismantling mass incarceration and defending democracy by challenging executive secrecy and restoring privacy principles precluded by the era of mass surveillance. These are also the objects of widespread bipartisan popular consensus ignored by institutional actors including corporate Democrats.

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

- Matt Gonzalez: I volunteered on Matt's 2003 mayoral campaign, am proud to call him a longstanding mentor, and am grateful for his advice, guidance, and endorsement of our campaign.
 - People for Bernie: As the largest grassroots network supporting the election of our first Jewish President, I'm especially honored by this endorsement. The opportunity to offer Bernie supporters an outlet for their outrage towards corporate rule over Congress is a key part of our campaign strategy.
 - Dr. Cornel West has been a voice of prophetic wisdom for decades, and I've admired his brilliance & eloquence. I secured his endorsement on a dance floor while listening to an old Prince track, and feel humbled by the chance to represent his views in our race.
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What for-profit or non-profit boards do you serve on, including political organizations?

-- Defending Rights And Dissent (DRAD)

-- Fund for Constitutional Government (FCG)

-- From 2017-2019, I also served on the board of Media Justice (previously known as the Center for Media Justice).

What local and state commissions or policy bodies do you serve on?

None. I was invited many years ago to consider joining the San Francisco police commission, but declined both because my travel schedule for work rendered the role untenable, and also because the commission has lacked the independence or consensus necessary to restrain civil rights abuses.

House of Representatives

What communities do you feel you represent in SF and how do those communities hold you accountable?

- Muslims
- Immigrants
- Progressives
- Digital rights activists
- Countercultures & artists
- San Franciscans of color
- Working families

My longstanding relationships with movement builders and organizers were substantial factors enabling my decision to run for office, and these same relationships can hold me accountable. First, I'm keenly aware of how little influence I wield myself, and am consequently beholden to the intersectional social movements that have fueled our campaign and to which I've dedicated my preceding career.

I encourage anyone, including San Franciscans in these communities, to always raise their voices to champion the issues that matter to them. In addition to private channels such as meetings with my office, I also encourage constituents to leverage public channels, including opeds and expressive actions like creative public education projects, marches, rallies, and protests.

These very same actions that can hold me accountable as a legislator also offer social movements opportunities to champion their concerns in the public sphere, beyond my office as one institution in a broader landscape. They also represent political cover, which can empower legislators eager to take grassroots leadership—like me—to challenge institutional inertia in Washington and challenge executive agencies and our various interlocking industrial complexes.

Name three local campaigns you have supported and describe the extent of your support.

I supported Chesa Boudin, and expressed my support in a litany of ways. Our campaign has built formidable social media channels (including over 26,000 followers on Twitter; 14,000 on Facebook; and over 8,000 on Instagram), on all of which we posted many messages promoting Chesa's campaign. I also spoke at events supporting Chesa; promoted his campaign in social circles; donated to his campaign; pounded pavement on multiple occasions for GOTV, visibility, and lit drops; and also recruited more a dozen volunteers to join me on Election Day.

I also supported Dean Preston. In addition to lending our social media channels to promoting his campaign for D5 Supervisor, promoting his campaign informally, donating to it, and turning out to support mobilizations along with volunteers, I also shared several hours working at a phone bank on election day.

In 2018, I joined lit drops supporting Prop C and also advocated for the measure on social media.

Please share your fundraising total to date, the number of donors, and the number of volunteers on your campaign.

Are you taking corporate or PAC money? Please explain.

No. I reject corporate PAC donations and have signed a pledge to specifically reject money from fossil fuel industries.

Describe one or two specific accomplishments in your political work- what did you get done, what was your role?

1) Marriage equality: In 2004, while practicing law in Washington D.C. for a law firm based in San Francisco, I organized the legal team for Mayor Jason West of New Paltz, New York. My client became the second mayor in the country (after then Mayor Gavin Newsome) to recognize the right of consenting adults to marry the partner of their choice. While we lost the civil case at the heart of our litigation strategy in 2006, we won marriage equality in the state legislature only a few years later, and then at the U.S. Supreme Court shortly after that. Many people today take marriage equality for granted. Only 15 years ago, no one thought it was possible.

2) Local limits on police surveillance from San Francisco to Providence, Rhode Island: The recent passage of a groundbreaking ban on face surveillance in San Francisco reflects work I directly supported through my work at the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), and also reflects components of an organizing & policy strategy that I developed in 2010 to combat racial & religious profiling (across the wars on drugs, terror, and immigration) in its various dimensions at once rather than in disempowering silos. This spring, I spoke in favor of the SF measure before its passage, after coordinating with Supervisor Peskin's office at the drafting stage since fall 2018. In Providence, local activists incorporated portions of the Local Civil Rights Restoration Act, which I wrote at BORDC, into the Providence Community-Police Relations Act passed into law in 2017.

Please list specific ways you have shown up for immigrants at risk of deportation.

I've advocated for immigrant rights in many ways. I've:

-- participated in multiple occupations of the ICE office in San Francisco, and a protest at Pelosi fundraiser in the financial district the morning after she agreed to give Trump over \$4.5 billion to fund his border concentration camps;

-- participated in occupations, marches, and rallies promoting immigrant rights in Washington DC, including one in which I was struck by an irate motorist and another in which we occupied Union Station;

-- advocated in San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley for restrictions on the intelligence gathering capacity of local jurisdictions to strengthen local sanctuary commitments;

-- advocated for the nation's first ban on face surveillance technology, which is poised to uniquely discriminate against immigrants, and built on the back of supposed immigrant deportation schemes of which I have been publicly critical for years.

-- Visited San Diego and the ICE & CBP migrant detention centers near the city, including the private detention center at Otay Mesa. I met with local human rights advocates, and have been sharing their concerns—addressing the rights of U.S. citizens as well as migrants—since returning.

-- I wrote FOIA requests seeking information about Salesforce contracts with ICE, CBP, and other DHS component agencies.

Please list specific ways you have fought against racism and white supremacy.

My existence is resistance: My campaign also intrinsically challenges racism and white supremacy by seeking to wrest power away from white officeholders, and replace the leader among the corporate Democrats in the House, in particular, with an immigrant replacement from a particularly disfavored national origin. My service as a spokesperson to our intersectional movements for justice necessarily challenges the narratives underlying white nationalism.

Expanding human rights in a time of conservative domination: My work representing Mayor Jason West from New Paltz, NY starting in 2004 helped catapult the movement for marriage equality from a local story isolated to San Francisco into a national debate. While we lost that case as we expected to, it paved the way to organizing opportunities, a legislative victory in New York State five years after our case was decided, and a federal victory in the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015. Having spearheaded LGBTQ rights as a young cis, hertero, Muslim lawyer, I'm eager to continue fighting the right wing.

Defending civil rights and challenging police abuses: My work challenging police departments also intersects white nationalism, to the (unfortunately substantial) extent that white supremacists have successfully infiltrated law enforcement agencies.

In particular, my work in solidarity with the movement for black lives demonstrates my willingness to take political risks. I've participated in occupying sites from Washington's Union Station and DuPont Circle (where I was struck by an irate hedge fund lawyer who used his SUV as a battering ram to plow through a crowd), to a shopping malls in St. Louis, to an intersection outside a police precinct here in SF.

I've also demonstrated thought leadership in the movement for black lives, challenging the movement orthodoxy in 2015 with early public warnings about the risks—ultimately, the ruse—of police body cameras, which I foretold would prove largely fruitless in advancing civil rights while presenting yet another vector driving authoritarian state omniscience. My article in Truthout explained the issues succinctly, and drove discussions across the civil rights community from the Dream Defenders in Miami to Saint Louis University Law School. Our early recognition of how the movement was being co-opted is the particular reason cited by Professor Justin Hansford from Howard Law School for his (forthcoming, TBA) endorsement of our campaign.

Limits on police surveillance: The recent passage of a groundbreaking ban on face surveillance

in San Francisco reflects work I directly supported through my work at the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). It also reflects components of an organizing & policy strategy that I developed in 2010 to combat racial & religious profiling (across the wars on drugs, terror, and immigration) in its various dimensions at once rather than in disempowering silos. My work organizing, writing, speaking, and advocating for limits on state surveillance is informed by its history of politicization, and recurring eras during which state surveillance has been weaponized to neutralize dissent. Communities impacted by this suppression of dissent include communities of color (designated by today's FBI as so-called "black identity extremists"), immigrants, animal rights networks, and environmental activists.

Immigrant rights: I advocated as early as 2010 for the rights and authorities of sanctuary cities to dissent from federal immigration enforcement mandates. Since 2008, I've publicly supported local withdrawals from the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces, as well as local rejections of enforcement powers invited by 287(g) and the Secure Communities Initiative (S-COMM). I was an early advocate challenging S-COMM, and warned of the significance of then-recent findings about the program's broader contours: the FBI's Next Generation Initiative, which includes biometric data about hundreds of millions of Americans, collected from sources as seemingly innocuous as state DMVs.

My work on the boards of Defending Rights and Dissent (and until recently, also Media Justice) also advanced immigrant rights. By participating in the governance and fundraising supporting non-profits, I've helped promote local autonomy from federal mandates, and defend the right to dissent from state suppression, surveillance, and violence.

Intersectional and interdisciplinary organizing: I appeal to, represent, and am able to engage in diverse communities. As an immigrant Muslim, I can empathize with the experiences endured by our communities' most vulnerable members. That's a crucial qualification in choosing who to represent our city in Congress.

Beyond relating to vulnerable communities, I also connect more easily with them. My identity as an immigrant and artist enables me to connect with people of color and young people even more easily than the professionals, advocates, and public servants with whom I was trained and with whom I work every day.

November 2019 Election

Who did you support for District Attorney?

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Unranked Endorsement
Suzy Loftus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leif Dautch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nancy Tung	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chesa Boudin	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Who did you Support for D5 Supervisor?

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Unranked Endorsement
Dean Preston	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vallie Brown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ryan Lam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nomvula O'Meara	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Last questions...we promise.

What do you for fun in San Francisco?

I am a DJ, poet, dancer, and runner. I run & play capoeira in Golden Gate Park, where I often play percussion in drum circles. In addition to performing street poetry at 16th & Mission on occasional Thursday nights, I also hold down a monthly DJ set at a club in the Castro and frequently perform at fundraisers and parties. While it might seem recreational, my music is sharply political. I have shared politicized performances at the foot of the Washington Monument across the street from the White House, across Washington DC's parks & transit stations, and also at countercultural converges including Burning Man, events in the countercultures that comprise it, and rallies, marches, and protests since 2003 for audiences as large as 30,000 from San Francisco and Portland to Washington, New York, and Boston. My music is as incisively critical as my scholarship and policy work; Ferguson to Jerusalem connects the dots between seemingly separate dimensions of police violence around the world; NSA vs USA offers a hip-hop history lesson about how surveillance undermines dissent and democracy; and Bumpin in My SUV is a frontal rejection of libertarian consumerism and explains its role in fueling both militarism and climate chaos.

Why do you want the League of Pissed Off Voters' endorsement?

I am a pissed off voter myself, and I have helped distribute league voter guides in several previous elections. I also respect the value of local grassroots networks participating in elections by informing our neighbors, and am eager to distribute League voter guides widely through our growing community of volunteers in every part of San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

I have done the job of representing San Francisco's values in Washington before, even without wielding a seat in Congress. My combination of having been invited to brief members of Congress about proposal valance reform, while also arrested in the Senate for an act of journalism, is unique in the Republic's history.

Outside the litigation arena, my work in policy has focused particularly on challenging executive power and defending civil liberties. I have spoken at congressional briefings at the invitations of Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI) in 2011 and former Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) in 2015, a few months before being arrested in a Senate hearing chamber in 2015 for a related act of journalism, in which I asked Obama DNI James Clapper how he justified never facing a charge for perjury despite lying to the Senate under oath about grave constitutional crimes when Eric Garner was killed in the street in New York with neither charge nor trial based on mere suspicion of a trivial offense with no victim or third party harm.

I am eager to provide San Francisco long overdue representation in Congress that aligns with our city's visionary values.

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